Sūrah al-Rūm

Central Theme and Relation with Previous *Sūrah*

This *sūrah* is the counterpart of the previous *sūrah*: al-'Ankabūt. Both have the same Qur'ānic name: Alif Lām Mīm. For this reason, there is not much difference in the central themes of the two. In the previous sūrah, in spite of the apparent trying circumstances, Muslims are given glad tidings of divine help and supremacy. These glad tiding are based on the foundation that this universe has been created by the Almighty with a purpose; He is the one and only and all things are under His control; He will grant supremacy in this world to His messenger and his companions; after this world, there will be a Hereafter too where God's perfect justice will manifest itself and evil will be totally vanquished and those who adhered to the truth will enter into an eternal kingdom.

The above mentioned issues were under discussion between the Muslims and the Idolaters when in their neighbourhood in 614 AD the Magians attacked the Roman occupied lands of Syria and Palestine and expelled them from there. Since the Romans were Christians and hence closer to Muslims with regard to their religion, Muslims had a natural sympathy for them. On the contrary, the Magians were polytheists and hence all the sympathies of the Idolaters of Arabia lied with them. The defeat of the Romans by the Magians greatly boosted the confidence of these Idolaters. On its basis, they started to make fun of all the directives of the Qur'ān which were against their desires. For example, the belief of the Muslims that the religion of monotheism alone is the correct religion or that Muslims will triumph or that the Day of Judgement will come in which the truth will reign supreme. The Idolaters would contend that all these notions of the Muslims are baseless; had they been true, how could the Magians have triumphed over the Romans? They concluded that this event clearly showed that their religion and viewpoint was correct and that they would remain supreme and continue to rule.

Through this event, the Qur'ān has once again delineated the facts which the Idolaters had cast doubt upon.

In order to understand the coherence of this *sūrah*, though this background

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is sufficient, yet for the convenience of the readers, the analysis of the *sūrah* discourse is also present below.

Analysis of the Discourse

Verses (1-7): A brief reference is made to this victory of the Magians over the Romans and it is stated that the rise and fall of nations in this world are not incidental happenings. They occur on the basis of an established practice of the Almighty which is based on justice. However, people who have a superficial outlook of this world are not able to grasp this established practice.

Verses (8-18): Any person who reflects on the system of this world and its history will confess that its creator has not created it as a place of amusement and entertainment. Hence, it will necessarily culminate on a day of reward and punishment. Also evident from the history of nations is that God has dealt with them according to their character. Thus, the Hereafter is bound to come. Those who deny it deny an obvious reality. When it arrives, the believers will succeed and the disbelievers will end up as losers. Those who have fabricated partners of God and other deities are living on false support. On the Day of Judgement, these intercessors will prove to be of no worth. Only God is worthy of worship and obedience. Every object of this universe is singing his praises and glorifying Him. For this reason, it is the duty of human beings as well to glorify Him by night and day.

Verses (19-29): Arguments drawn from the world inside man and the one external to him are proffered to substantiate the beliefs of monotheism and the hereafter.

Verses (30-45): It is emphasized upon the Prophet (sws) to adhere to the religion corroborated by human nature and to invite others towards it. This religion is based on the institutions of the prayer and the *zakāh*. Those who have perverted this religion are admonished that the time of their accountability has drawn near. They should learn a lesson from the fate of previous nations. The Prophet (sws) is assured that he should keep doing his task with perseverance and wait for God's verdict.

Verses (46-60): Reference is given to historical arguments that substantiate the promise of God's help to the believers. The Prophet (sws) is assured that his message can touch the hearts of those people only who have intellect. So he should not be be disheartened by the attitude of those who have become deaf and blind. The Qur'ān is sufficient for those who have intellect. As far as the stubborn and the obdurate are concerned, not even a miracle can convince them. The Prophet (sws) should persist with his task with perseverance and wait for God's promise of divine help to be fulfilled.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ فِيْٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ؕ لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدُ ؕ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾
وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَهُمْ
عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ؕ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَانُوْٓا اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاَثَارُوا الْاَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوْهَآ اَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوْهَا وَ
جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ؕ فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِيْنَ
اَسَآءُوا السُّوْٓاٰى اَنْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَكَانُوْا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ اَللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَآئِهِمْ شُفَعٰٓؤُا وَكَانُوْا
بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَهُمْ
فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَآئِ الْاٰخِرَةِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

This is *Alif lām mīm*. The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land, and soon after their defeat – in a few years – they will be victorious. What happened earlier was on account of God's directive and what will happen later will be because of God's directive, and at that time the believers shall be pleased. With God's help. He helps whomsoever He intends and only He is powerful and merciful This is a definite promise of God and God never breaks His promises. But most people know not. They only know the outward aspect of the life of this world, and are totally heedless of the Hereafter. (1-7)

Have they not pondered on their hearts! God has created the heavens and the earth and what is between them with purpose and wisdom till an appointed time. And there are many among people who deny meeting their Lord. (8)

Have they not journeyed through the land to see the fate of those before them? They were more powerful and better than them in making the land fertile and in populating it and to them their messengers came with veritable signs. Thus God was not unjust to them; they themselves were unjust to their souls. Then evil was the fate of these who adopted the wrong attitude because they denied God's revelations and made fun of them. (9-10)

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It is God Who initiates creation. Then He will repeat this again. After that, you will return to Him. And the day when the Hereafter arrives, the wrongdoers will lose hope and no one from their partners with God will intercede for them and they will deny their partners with God. (11-13)

The day when the Hereafter arrives, the believers and the disbelievers will be separated. Thus those who professed faith and did good deeds will rejoice in a beautiful orchard. As for those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter will be seized in torment. Therefore, glorify God when you enter evening and when you enter morning and praises are being sung to Him in the heavens and the earth and at the time of *'ishā* also and also at the time when you enter *ẓuhr*. (14-18)

Explanation

الٓمٓ ۝١[1]

The expression الٓمٓ is a complete sentence as I have explained at various instances of this exegesis ie. "The implied construction is Sūrah Alif Lām Mīm." This is the Qur'ānic name of this *sūrah*. The previous *sūrah* also bears this name. This is an indication of the fact that there is not much difference in the central themes of both *sūrahs*. In the previous *sūrah*, the philosophy on which this universe is created and as its necessary consequence the glad tidings of divine help and dominance to the messenger of God were given. In this *sūrah*, the disbelievers while referring to an incident made a lot of fun of this claim of divine help and dominance. They thought that in the form of this incident they had such evidence to reject the prophethood of Muḥammad (sws) that made them rejoice. Quite naturally this caused sorrow to the Muslims. The Qur'ān, while citing this incident at the beginning of this *sūrah*, has explained all the aspects of this incident whose lack of knowledge had led the disbelievers to this misconception. Also since these aspects were not fully clear, a group of Muslims too was inflicted with doubt. In this way, this *sūrah*, substantiates and highlights the content of the previous one, and also refutes all doubts that arose or could arise in this regard. In other words, the subject under discussion in both *sūrahs* is the same. The only difference is of nature and style of reasoning. In both *sūrahs*, the veracity of Muḥammad (sws)'s prophethood is delineated on the basis of the principles presented by him.

غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ۝٢ فِيْٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ۝٣ فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ۭ لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْۢ

1. This is *Alif lām mīm*.

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بَعْدُ ؕ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ﴿۴﴾[2]

The expression اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ refers to Syria and Palestine which were immediately adjacent to Arabia. At that time, the Romans ruled that area but they were involved in severe internal strife. Taking advantage of this situation, the Persians attacked them and dislodged them from these areas. This incident took place in 614 AD. In other words, it happened in the sixth or seventh year of prophethood of Muḥammad (sws).

In the sentence وَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ the word غَلَبٌ is annexed to its object (*maf'ūl*). In other words, the Qur'ān has predicted that though the Romans have been defeated yet this defeat is temporary; very soon they will be victorious over the Persians.

The words فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ refer to the fact that the change of situation which the Qur'ān is informing them of will not take long. Only in a few years it will materialize. Though the word سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ already had the meaning of a near future in it yet it did have a ring of vagueness. In order to remove this vagueness, it is qualified by the words فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ. This made it evident that this revolution will spring before the next decade is over. The word بِضْعٌ does not apply to a number greater than ten. The need for this definite determination was because the Idolaters had presented this incident in support of the truthfulness of their thought and philosophy, as is referred to earlier. This had naturally hurt the Muslims. Through this emphatic prediction, the Qur'ān, on the one hand, has assured Muslims that the happiness of the disbelievers in regarding this incident to be in their support will be short lived and soon it will turn into sorrow; on the other hand, it has presented this incident to be a barometer for the truthfulness of Muḥammad's (sws) prophethood. It is evident from history that nine years after this incident Heraclius re-organized the Romans afresh and defeated the Persians and not only reclaimed many of their territories, he even conquered many of their lands. In this way, this prediction of the Qur'ān was fulfilled word for word.

The words لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدُ refer to the fact that whatever happened was on God's command and whatever will happen in the future will also happen at God's behest. Such great incidents in the life of nations do not take place by chance; they take place because of God's directive, and every directive of God is based on truth and justice. When the Romans became incriminated

2. The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land, and soon after their defeat – in a few years – they will be victorious. What happened earlier was on account of God's directive and what will happen later will be because of God's directive, and at that time the believers shall be pleased. With God's help.

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with the wrongdoings that entitle a person to God's wrath they could not save themselves merely on the basis that some of their beliefs and rituals were good. It is not merely beliefs and rituals which are primarily beneficial or harmful for the collective life of a nation; the real thing is the individual and collective character which emanates from these beliefs and rituals or should emanate from them. If such a character is not the result, then such hollow rituals are of no use. It was this very hollowness of the Romans which was the cause of their defeat before the Persians. Now the glad tidings which are being given of their victory over the Persians in the near future which will take place because of God's command and each command of God is based on truth and justice. Hence, the Romans will necessarily triumph and after reforming their ways will become eligible to God's help against the Persians.

The words وَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ state that on that day Muslims will rejoice. Not only because those who are closer to them in religion and ideology will be victorious but also because a great prediction of the Qur'ān in favour of the prophethood of Muḥammad (sws) will be fulfilled.

This aspect is worthy of attention that even though the Romans were not true followers of Christianity and their beliefs and deeds had become incriminated with many flaws, Muslims still were more sympathetic towards them against the Romans. The Almighty even praised this sympathy. It is on this principle that Islam has based its law and dealings with other non-Muslim nations. In other words, the more a nation is closer to Islam in its beliefs, deeds and ideology the more sympathetic Muslims will feel towards it in the international arena.

بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ۝[3]

The words بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ can be connected to سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ or to يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ. In this first case, the meaning will be that the dominance they will achieve will be because of God's help; none other than Him can help anyone. It should remain in consideration that the will of God is based on truth and justice and hence He does not help those who are not worthy of it as per truth and justice. The reference to His attributes of power and mercy are meant to express the nature of His will. Since He is powerful, no one can stop Him in implementing His will and since He is merciful, every will of His is based on justice and mercy. His will never induces Him to entertain Himself by pitting one nation against another.

3. He helps whomsoever He intends and only He is powerful and merciful.

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وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۶﴾[4]

The word وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ here is an emphasized participle (*maṣdar mu'akkad*). For this reason, it will have the meaning of emphasis incorporated in it. In other words, this promise of God's help is absolutely certain to materialize for the believers. God will never breach His promise yet those who can only see the apparent and cannot see His invisible hand which is behind this apparent will not understand this. The fulfillment of promise mentioned here does not merely refer to the triumph of the Romans but also refers to the triumph of the Prophet (sws) and His companions that was refuted by the Quraysh on the basis of the victory of the Persians. After commenting on this incident, the Qur'ān has stated with great emphasis that it will be fulfilled – something which is primarily mentioned in this *sūrah*. In verses 47 and 60 ahead, it will be further explained.

يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۷﴾[5]

The reasons that has made certain people slaves to the apparent as mentioned in the previous verse are alluded to: these people only have a superficial outlook of this world and are not able to delve behind the apparent in order to see who the real being is who controls everything and what His attributes are. For this reason, they regard this world to be a place of amusement. The second reason is that they are totally oblivious to the Hereafter. If they are heedless to the Hereafter, then without it this universe can in no way be regarded to be based on justice and mercy.

In the expression وَ هُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ, the repetition of the inchoative (*mubtadā'*) evidences the fact that the Qur'ān wants to emphasize that it is these people who are actually heedless of the Hereafter. The reason for this emphasis is that the Idolaters of Arabia would not openly refute the Hereafter; yet they had fabricated such a system of intercession and polytheism that the Hereafter had become a totally meaningless thing for them. The Qur'ān wants to point out here that no one should think that these people acknowledge the Hereafter in any respect. The fact is that these people are totally heedless of it.

اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِيْۤ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ؕ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَاۤ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا

4. This is a definite promise of God and God never breaks His promises. But most people know not.

5. They only know the outward aspect of the life of this world, and are totally heedless of the Hereafter.

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مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝٨[6]

This and some of the succeeding verses further corroborate what is said in the previous verse. The arguments are drawn from the world around man. If these people had reflected from within their hearts, it would have become evident to them that God has not created the heavens and the earth and that between them without any purpose merely as a means of amusement. On the contrary, everything has been created for a purpose and will exist till a specific time period. So when everything has been created with a purpose and is also tied to a time period of existence, how can it be thought that human beings, who are clearly a superior creation of God, have been created without a purpose? This entails that a day come wherein human beings are held accountable for their deeds: if a person has done good deeds, he should be rewarded and if he has done evil deeds, he should suffer punishment for them. If this does not happen, it would mean that this universe is merely a place of entertainment and amusement and that human beings have been created with any purpose and will not be brought to account. This obviously is against the purposeful nature of this universe to which every object testifies. In Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān, precisely this topic is discussed thus: وَيَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (٣: ١٩٠ ١٩١) (And reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth and declare: “Lord! You have not created this without a purpose. Glory be to You! Save us from the punishment of the Fire.” (3:190-191).

The opening words اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ of the verse under discussion highlight that this wisdom in the creation of the heavens and the earth becomes evident to only those people who delve deep into their own selves and intend to know the real truth. As for those who blindly follow others or demand miracles and signs to deny the truth and are always ready to indulge in confrontational dialogue, they remain deprived of the truth.

The words وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ imply that this fact is absolutely evident but many of the foolish still think that they have been made to enjoy the luxuries of life and one day they will perish in this manner. They will never have to face any day of accountability in future.

اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَانُوْٓا اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاَثَارُوا الْاَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوْهَآ اَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوْهَا وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ؕ فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ۝٩

6. Have they not pondered on their hearts! God has created the heavens and the earth and what is between them with purpose and wisdom till an appointed time. And there are many among people who deny meeting their Lord.

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ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسَآءُوا السُّوْٓاٰى اَنْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَ كَانُوْا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾[7]

These verses substantiate the above stated premise through historical arguments: had these people reflected on the signs and history of their area, they would have seen the fate reached by nations who were mightier than they and more adept in cultural and creative prowess. The reference is to the nations of ‘Ād, the Thamūd and Madyan etc whose anecdotes have been mentioned in detail in the previous *sūrahs*. It is stated that their respective messengers came to them with clear signs but they shut their eyes in such a manner that no sign should be able to open them. The consequence of this was that God seized them in punishment and this was no act of injustice from God. They themselves were responsible for being unjust to their souls because they did not give due regard to the warning God gave to them. On the contrary, they denied the revelations of God and were audacious enough to make fun of them. The implication is that the Quraysh should reflect on the history of nations and think what they testify to. Do they testify that this world is a place which goes on unchecked and that a person may do whatever he like so that no one is there to stop him? Or do they they testify that God has always dealt with nations in accordance with His laws based on justice and wisdom? Obviously, it is this second case. It further emanates from it that a day will come in which God will hold each individual accountable and reward or punish him according to his deeds.

اَللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾[8]

In the previous verses, it is shown that this universe has been made with a purpose, the law of retribution found in it is a certain truth. Now in this and the succeeding verses, in very clear words the reality is highlighted which everyone will have to face. The verse states that it is God Who begins creation and it is He alone He Who will recreate. Found in these few words are both the claim and the evidence to this claim. The claim is that God will recreate. The evidence to this is that it is He Who began the creation. Obviously, he who began creation and did not encounter any difficulty in it

7. Have they not journeyed through the land to see the fate of those before them? They were more powerful and better than them in making the land fertile and in populating it and to them their messengers came with veritable signs. Thus God was not unjust to them; they themselves were unjust to their souls. Then evil was the fate of these who adopted the wrong attitude because they denied God’s revelations and made fun of them.

8. It is God Who initiates creation. Then He will repeat this again, After that, you will return to Him.

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will not face any difficulty when he takes up this task again. In fact, repeating a task is easier than doing it for the first time. This is the answer to the disbelievers of the Day of Judgement: they regard it to be a far-fetched event whereas if the first creation was not far-fetched how can recreating be something far-fetched.

The words ثُمَّ اِلَيۡهِ تُرۡجَعُوۡنَ dispel the second misconception of the disbelievers. In the first place, they regarded the Hereafter to be unlikely and if they did believe in it hypothetically, they reckoned that they will return to their deities. These deities were favoured by God in their view and such is the favour they hold with Him that they will not allow God to punish them and if He does intend to punish them these deities will save them through their intercession. The verse states that they should do away with this foolish notion. Every one will return to God alone and no one else on that day will be there to which they will return.

وَيَوۡمَ تَقُوۡمُ السَّاعَةُ يُبۡلِسُ الۡمُجۡرِمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَلَمۡ يَكُنۡ لَّهُمۡ مِّنۡ شُرَكَآئِهِمۡ شُفَعٰٓؤُا وَكَانُوۡا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمۡ كٰفِرِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ [9]

The word ابلاس means to lose hope and be bewildered. The verses state that these adversaries who today are relying on the support of their deities will become hopeless and wordless when on the Day of Judgement the real picture comes before their eyes. They will see that none of those whom they associated with God and whom they worshipped all their lives will be there to intercede for them.

The words وَكَانُوۡا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمۡ كٰفِرِيۡنَ state that these people themselves, who today are united against all those who oppose their deities, will reject these deities. I have explained in the exegesis of Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ that in the various phases of the Day of Judgement the disbelievers will adopt different attitudes with the deities they associated with God. In utter bewilderment and anxiety, they will try to do whatever they can in various situations to achieve their end. However, on that day, they will not be able to achieve any end they have. It will be a place where they will have to face the reality.

Here this feature of the language should be kept in mind in which future events are expressed in the past tense, for example وَلَمۡ يَكُنۡ لَّهُمۡ and وَكَانُوۡا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمۡ. This style is adopted to convey to the addressees that what they consider as improbable is presented before them by the speaker in the past tense as if the event has already taken place. The Qur'ān has adopted this style at most places where the events of the Hereafter are depicted.

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9. And the day when the Hereafter arrives, the wrongdoers will lose hope and no one from their partners with God will intercede for them and they will deny their partners with God.

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وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَهُمْ فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ اَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَآئِ الْاٰخِرَةِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾[10]

This verse implies that this world has been created as a place of trials and tests and hence believers and disbelievers are intermingled in it. In most cases, the righteous are oppressed and persecuted and the wrongdoers are dominant. For this reason, this world does not seem to be a meaningful place to people who are without insight. However, when the Day of Judgement arrives, the believers and the disbelievers will be separated. Those who had faith and had done righteous deeds will be in bliss in a grand orchard, and those who disbelieved and denied God's revelations and meeting Him will be seized with punishment. Here the word رَوْضَةٌ is mentioned as a common noun to magnify it. In other words, they will be in the grandest of the orchards of Paradise. The word يُّحْبَرُوْنَ means to make someone happy and blissful. The implication is that God will provide them with all the means that will make them joyous. The word مُحْضَرُوْنَ is meant to portray the humiliation and helplessness of the wrongdoers. The implication is that they will be tied up and dragged towards the torment the way convicted prisoners are hauled up.

فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾[11]

This verse states what is required of people if they believe in God's oneness and in His law of retribution mentioned in previous verses. It is said that the consequence of this belief is that they should only glorify God by morning and evening and at the time of *ẓuhr* and *'aṣr*.

The words وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ form a parenthetical sentence in between the times of glorifying God. It is meant to remind and warn people. The implication is that this call to glorify Him is not an alien call; every part of the heavens and the earth are singing His praises. So those who are worshipping someone other than God are not in harmony with the overall tune of the universe. However, those who are glorifying God and singing His praises are in harmony with it. Found in these words is also a ring of aloofness that the

10. The day when the Hereafter arrives, the believers and the disbelievers will be separated. Thus those who professed faith and did good deeds will rejoice in a beautiful orchard. As for those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter will be seized in torment.

11. Therefore, glorify God when you enter evening and when you enter morning and praises are being sung to Him in the heavens and the earth and at the time of *'ishā* also and also at the time when you enter *ẓuhr*.

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unfortunate people who are not glorifying God and singing His praises should not think that there is a dearth in this regard. Every nook and corner of this universe resounds with God's glorification and praise.

Deliberation shows that the times which God has specified for expressing His glorification and praise are the ones in which a great sign appears. For example, the night passes into the day or the day into the night; the sun descends from the line of sight or the night darkens. Obviously, for a person who reflects, these times specially effect his heart and mind and shake and prod him to remember God at the time when at His behest such a great transformation takes place in the world. If this does not move a person, then it means he is a dull animal.

The prayers of *fajr* and *ẓuhr* are very clearly mentioned in these verses. If the word تُمْسُوْنَ is considered to imply both *'aṣr* and *maghrib* prayers and the word عَشِيًّا implies the *'ishā'* prayer, then all the prayer timings can be understood to be mentioned in these verses. The word عَشِيًّا can be applied both to the time of *zawāl* (time of sun's descent) and to the time between *maghrib* and *'ishā'*. For this reason, it would not be wrong to regard it to imply the time of *'ishā*.

Section II: Verses (19-29)

In the succeeding verses, arguments to substantiate the Hereafter and monotheism are mentioned in an appropriate order. The Hereafter is mentioned to delineate the fact that the real wisdom and meaningfulness of this world can only become evident with it. Monotheism is mentioned to show that without it the Hereafter is a meaningless thing: if it is believed that whatever a person's deeds, his intercessors will save him, then the advent of the Hereafter or otherwise is the same. The importance of the Hereafter is in the belief that on that day God's justice will completely manifest itself and no one would be able to hinder Him in administering impartial justice. Readers may now proceed to study the following verses.

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمِنْ
اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَاۤ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا
لِّتَسْكُنُوْۤا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ

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وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَآؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا
وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَيُحْيٖ بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنْ
تَقُوْمَ السَّمَآءُ وَالْاَرْضُ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ ثُمَّ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً ۖ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ ۖ اِذَاۤ اَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ؕ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ
الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَّثَلًا مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ
اَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَآءَ فِيْ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ فَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ تَخَافُوْنَهُمْ كَخِيْفَتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْۤا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

He brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. And turns the earth green again after it becomes dry. And in this manner you will be taken out. And among His signs is that He created you from clay; and, behold, you become human beings that spread out in the earth. And among His signs is also that He created spouses for you from among your species so that you receive comfort from them. And He planted love and sympathy among you. Indeed, there are different signs in this for those who reflect. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity in your languages and colours also. Indeed, there are different signs in this for people of knowledge. And among His signs is your sleeping at night and day seeking His bounty – Indeed, there are different signs in this for those who hear and understand. And from among His signs He shows you lightning which inspires fear in you and also hope and sends down rain from the sky, and thus gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, there are different signs in this for those who use their intellect. And among His signs is also that the heavens and the earth exist at His behest. Then when He calls you just once to come out of the earth, you shall come out of it immediately. And to Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. Everyone is obedient to Him. It is He who initiates creation, and it is He who will recreate and this is easier for Him. And His is the most exalted attribute in the heavens and the earth. And He alone is the Mighty, the Wise one. (22-27)

He cites a parable for you from among yourselves. Do some of your slaves share with you on equal terms the blessings We have bestowed on you and keep them in consideration the way you consider one another? In this way do We expound Our revelations for those who use their intellect. In fact, these people who have been unjust to their souls have followed their innovations without reason. So who can guide those whom God has led astray? And no

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one will be able to help them. (28-29)

Explanation

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾[12]

Just as the word اخراج means "to take out something from something," it also means "to make something apparent." This verse dispels the notion of the disbelievers that the recreation of mankind is something improbable. They are informed that how can they regard this as improbable if they see life coming out of death and death overtaking life in every part of this universe. As an example, the verse states that they see that the earth is dry and desolate at times but God through a single burst of rain brings life in it. In a similar way, people too will be raised to life again once they die and decay. Life and death are in the authority of the Almighty. Neither is giving death to the living nor raising the dead to life difficult for Him. The rehearsal of the Day of Judgement goes on before their eyes every now and then. Though the example of life after death is primarily meant to be presented here, yet in order to highlight the profound power of God, reference is also given of death after life. We have discussed this aspect in detail under verses 95-96 of Sūrah al-An'ām.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَاۤ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾[13]

The verse implies that all the realities to which they are being invited to believe in are based on the power and wisdom of their creator. So why do they demand external evidence for His power and wisdom? The greatest evidence of this is found within their own creation. He created human beings from clay. They then spread in the earth as cognizant beings. The particle اِذَآ is meant to direct attention to this profound power. In other words, people should reflect on the magnificent transformation from clay to a living human being. The two are so far apart yet God's power populated the whole world with human beings. In other words, if a person disputes God recreating mankind, then this is the height of foolishness. This is stated at another place in the Qur'ān in the following words:

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْاِنْسَانُ اَنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ فَاِذَا هُوَ خَصِيْمٌ مُّبِيْنٌ. وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَّنَسِيَ خَلْقَهٗ ؕ قَالَ مَنْ

12. He brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. And turns the earth green after it becomes dry. And in this manner you will be taken out.

13. And among His signs is that He created you from clay; and, behold, you become human beings that spread out in the earth.

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يُّحۡیِ الۡعِظَامَ وَ ہِیَ رَمِیۡمٌ. (۳٦: ۷۷-۷۸)[14]

Has man not reflected that We created him from a drop of fluid; yet he became an open rival. And he made fun of Me and forgot his own creation. He says: "Now, who can give life to bones when they have decayed?"

وَ مِنۡ اٰیٰتِہٖۤ اَنۡ خَلَقَ لَکُمۡ مِّنۡ اَنۡفُسِکُمۡ اَزۡوَاجًا لِّتَسۡکُنُوۡۤا اِلَیۡہَا وَ جَعَلَ بَیۡنَکُمۡ مَّوَدَّۃً وَّ رَحۡمَۃً ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ یَّتَفَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۱﴾[15]

Now a step further is taken: attention is directed at a great sign found in the world around man: God created from His species his spouse so that he may obtain comfort from her and for this purpose placed love and sympathy among them. It is stated that in this phenomenon are various signs for those who reflect.

The first clear sign in it is that God has created everything in pairs in this universe and each member of a pair complements its counterpart with regard to their basis of existence. This also indicates that this world also has a pair which is the Hereafter. It is together with the Hereafter that this world becomes meaningful.

The second sign in this is that our creator is very merciful and affectionate. If He placed the desire of a spouse in us, He also created her from our own species and also placed the emotions of love and sympathy between the two so that both spend their lives as two bodies having a single soul.

The third sign is that there exists great harmony in the opposing elements of this universe and an amazing accord to come together to fulfill a higher objective. This is a clear indication to the fact that this universe has one creator Who creates this harmony between these opposing elements.

The fourth sign is that people who think that this universe was created of its own accord are foolish. If it has evolved like this, then how can this harmony exist between opposing elements? This is a clear evidence to a powerful and wise being governing this whole system on the basis of His wisdom and sagacity.

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14. Has man not reflected that We created him from a drop of fluid; yet he became an open rival. And he made fun of Me and forgot his own creation. He says: "Now, who can give life to bones when they have decayed?"

15. And among His signs is also that He created spouses for you from among your species so that you receive comfort from them. And He planted love and sympathy among you. Indeed, in this are different signs for those who reflect.

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وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾[16]

Attention is directed at the fact stated earlier by restating it from a different angle: if people reflect, they will clearly see that hidden in the multiplicity found in this universe is unity. On the one had is the unfathomable expanse of the heavens and on the other is the planet earth. The two are far apart yet such is the deep relationship between the two that no sane person can believe that both have been brought into existence by separate creators and are being governed by separate forces. On the contrary, the harmony between them vehemently bears evidence that a single powerful and wise creator is governing both and has harnessed them to achieve a single objective. In a similar way, if the world of human beings is deliberated upon, it will be seen that whole nations have different languages and each person has a different accent and there exist people of different colours as well. However, in spite of this diversity, no sane person can claim that people of a certain language and accent are the creatures of one God and other people are the creatures of another God: every wise person knows that a single creator has brought all of them into existence. It is merely the profound nature of His creative skill that He has created every single person in a different mold with a different voice. No two people are alike among the billions found on this planet. Each has different colours, heights and features.

The words اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ state that there are many signs in this for those who have knowledge. In the previous verse, it was said that there are many signs for those who reflect. It is evident from this that the real knowledgeable are those who reflect on this universe and through this reflection observe unity in multiplicity and accord in discord. They then reflect on the attributes of power and wisdom of God and reach the conclusion that this huge universe has not been made without a purpose. Hence a day of judgement will necessarily come in which the righteous are rewarded for their righteousness and the wrongdoers are punished for their wrongdoing.

It also evident from this verse that the difference in the language and colour among people should not be made the basis of discrimination between them. These features should not be the means of make or break between them. Just as in spite of diversity in language and colour very human being is a creature of God, in a similar way in spite of other such apparent differences human beings should live under the same system of God's governance. Those who

16. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity in your languages and colours also. Indeed, there are different signs in this for people of knowledge.

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regard colour and creed to be a means of discrimination between human beings strike on the unity of this universe and this in the terms of the Qur'ān is polytheism and spreading disorder in the land.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَآؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾[17]

The words مَنَامُكُمْ are co-ordinated to ابْتِغَآؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ. The verse would thus mean: among His signs is the night in which you sleep and the day in which you strive to find His sustenance. Parallels of this interpretation can be seen in earlier *sūrahs*.

The words اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ mean that in this are also signs for those who listen. The corroboration of monotheism found in the harmony between night and day and of the indication of the Hereafter in getting up in the morning from night's sleep has been referred to at many places in this exegesis. However, these signs and arguments can only be understood by those who pay heed to the calls of the Qur'ān and the messenger. This sentence is a sarcastic critique on the attitude of the opponents that those who are bent upon animosity instead of listening and understanding will not be able to benefit from these arguments.

In the previous verses, the words تَفَكُّر (reflection) and عِلْم (knowledge) are mentioned. I have already alluded to their mutual relationship. Here the word سَمْعٌ (listening) is used. Obviously, it is lesser in status than the two above mentioned faculties, yet it is also a means of acquiring knowledge. If a personal is sensible enough to listen to what sensible people say, he can received guidance from this means as well even if he does not have much ability to reflect on the system of this universe and its secrets.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَيُحْيٖ بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾[18]

This verse states that among God's signs is lightning which has the aspects of hope and despair as well as of anticipation and fear in it. At times, it heralds the coming of rain as a bounty of God and at others, wreaks havoc for a nation. The first of these cases is very common which we often see. The

17. And among His signs is your sleeping at night and day seeking His bounty – Indeed, there are different signs in this for those who hear and understand.

18. And from among His signs He shows you lightning which inspires fear in you and also hope and sends down rain from the sky, and thus gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, there are different signs in this for those who use their intellect.

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second of these can be seen in the history of ancient nations. The Qur'ān has mentioned صَاعِقَةٌ (lightning) in the destruction of the 'Ād and the Thamūd and I have explained its implication at relevant places. The verse ends on the note that there are signs in these phenomena for those who use their intellect. The first sign in it is that both mercy and destruction are in the hands of God. For this reason in the states of hope and despair as well as in the states of anticipation and fear, people should turn towards God. It is absolutely wrong of the Idolaters to regard one being to bestow mercy on mankind another to send down torment on them. The second sign is that it is an absolutely wrong notion that God is not concerned with the affairs of this universe; the fact is that He is directly running these affairs and according to His law of justice rewards or punishes nations. The third sign in this is that if the Almighty intends to send His punishment on a nation, He does not need a separate team for this task; He can turn any of his blessings into a bane.

I have referred to the argumentative aspect found in وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَيُحۡيِۦ بِهِ الۡاَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا while explaining verse 19 earlier.

وَمِنۡ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنۡ تَقُوۡمَ السَّمَآءُ وَالۡاَرۡضُ بِاَمۡرِهٖ ؕ ثُمَّ اِذَا دَعَاكُمۡ دَعۡوَةً ۖ مِّنَ الۡاَرۡضِ ۖ اِذَاۤ اَنۡتُمۡ تَخۡرُجُوۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنۡ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ ؕ كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوۡنَ ﴿۲۶﴾[19]

These verses strongly negate the notion that may arise in a person's mind: how can this secure system of the heavens and the earth be shattered at the advent of the Day of Judgement? It may be kept in mind that the question which the Arabs would raise about the mountains would be on these very lines: who can move these structures? For this reason, they regarded the threats of the advent of this Day to be mere bluff. It is while keeping in view this mentality of theirs that this verse states that the heavens and the earth are intact because of God's behest and shall remain intact as long as He wants them. When He would like to destroy this system and create a new one in its place, He will not face the slightest difficulty. He will just need to call people once from the earth and everyone will immediately issue forth. In other words, He would not even need to repeat His call. A single cry would be enough. This point is stated thus in Sūrah al-Inshiqāq: (٨٤:٢) وَاَذِنَتۡ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتۡ (and obeys its Lord's command and this only is befitting for it, (84:2)).

19. And among His signs is also that the heavens and the earth exist at His behest. Then when He calls you just once to come out of the earth, you shall come out of it immediately. And to Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. Everyone is obedient to Him.

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The words وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ are meant to substantiate what is said above that whatever the heavens and the earth contain are His creatures and are subservient and obedient to Him alone. So who can dare disobey Him or deviate even the slightest from His call.

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ؕ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۲۷﴾[20]

This verse not only substantiates the words اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُوْنَ of the above verse but also encapsulates the topic of monotheism which is coming up. This rationale of being raised up on the Day of Judgement has also been given in verse 11 earlier. The same words are not repeated here; in fact the words وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ are also added. It is stated that it is He who initiates creation and it is He who will recreate and this recreation is easier for them if people just think. The implication is that when the addressees of this verse accept that it is He who has created them, why do they regard His recreating them to be improbable? Is the first task more difficult or repeating it?

In the sentence وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ, the word الْمَثَل connotes an attribute. It is used as an attribute of God in the Qur'ān because His attributes are mentioned in words which belong to our language and which we speak. This style has been adopted because without adopting it, these attributes cannot be properly gauged by us; obviously, they have been used in the higher meaning which befits the Almighty.

It is said that it is He who is worthy of all noble attributes found in the heavens and the earth. No one else shares these attributes with Him. After this, two of His attributes are specially referred to: الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ (dominant and wise). He is dominant on everything and is exalted and that all His works are based on wisdom. The implication is that no task is difficult for Him. Nothing except His wisdom intervenes in His intention. There is no one in the whole universe who is a peer to His attributes. It self-evidently emanates from this that when there is no one who can match Him in His attributes, no one should be regarded as His match in the obligations man owes to Him.

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَّثَلًا مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَآءَ فِيْ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ فَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ

20. It is He who initiates creation, and it is He who will recreate and this is easier for Him. And His is the most exalted attribute in the heavens and the earth. And He alone is the Mighty, the Wise one.

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تَخَافُوْنَهُمْ كَخِيْفَتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾[21]

Mentioned in this verse is a rationale against associating others in the attributes and rights of God which the addressees of this verse themselves acknowledge. It is stated that to find an argument against their polytheism, these people do not need to go anywhere; God presents their own mutual dealing as a proof of His claim. They are posed this question: Do they regard their slaves and servants to have an equal share in the wealth He has blessed them with and they regard their slaves the way they regard their relatives? The word خَوف here means to "give regard." It is used in wide meanings and I have discussed this aspect at some place in this exegesis.

The implication is that when these people are not ready to grant their slaves equal ownership to what they have even though it has been given to them by God, why have they made associates of God in His rights? This is a very unjust act as they ascribe to God what they do not like for their own selves even though it is God Who in alone in these heavens and the earth is in fact worthy of all high attributes and rights. This is a psychological argument in refutation of polytheism like the one cited at another place in the Qur'ān in which it is said that the polytheists ascribe daughters to God while they themselves dislike daughters and even feel ashamed to let others people know that they have daughters among their offspring. The real argumentative aspect which is present here is that notwithstanding the fact that there are plenty of arguments and signs against polytheism in the world inside man and that around him as well as in nature and intellect, another argument against it is that the polytheists ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves. The right attitude in this regard would have been that what they do not like for themselves they should have been even more strict in not ascribing to God.

It is as if the above argument has completed the objective for whose explanation it was given. Hence the verse ends with the words: كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ (in this manner, we explain our arguments for those who use their intellect). For those who do not use their intellect and have consigned it to oblivion, these arguments can be of no avail.

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21. He cites a parable for you from among yourselves. Do some of your slaves share with you on equal terms the blessings We have bestowed on you and keep them in consideration the way you consider one another? In this way do We expound Our revelations for those who use their intellect.

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بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾[22]

The expression الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا refers to the polytheists who are guilty of committing an oppression as great as polytheism. It is stated that these people are not among those who are guided by intellect; they are the ones who follow their desires and innovations. In the expression بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ the word عِلْمٍ connotes "argument and proof." In other words, it is not knowledge and proof which they have made their guide; they are blindly following their desires.

The words فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ imply that those who have gone astray in accordance with the law of God cannot be guided by anyone. God has blessed human beings with intellect but many wretched people have consigned their reins to their whims. God lets such crooked people wander in their desires. The words وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ imply that these people then spend their lives in this wandering; neither is there anyone for them in this world who can bring them back to the right path nor will they find any helper in the Hereafter to save them from destruction.

Section III: Verses (30-39)

In the preceding verses, an answer is given to the objections raised by the Idolaters against the call of Islam by citing the defeat of the Romans at the hands of the Persians in their support. Now in the succeeding verses, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are strongly urged to follow with full concentration and devotion the religion of nature: Islam and to fully adhere to its two pillars: the prayer and spending for the cause of God. At the end, the Quraysh are warned that their evil beliefs and deeds have encompassed them from all sides; so now the time of their accountability has drawn near. They will soon meet their fate and those who diligently adhere to the religion of Abraham (sws) will be rewarded by God with His blessings. Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۭ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَكَانُوْا شِيَعًا ۭ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۢ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ

22. In fact, these people who have been unjust to their souls have followed their innovations without reason. So who can guide those whom God has led astray? And no one will be able to help them.

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مُّنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَذَاقَهُمْ مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ؕ
فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۫ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَمْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِذَآ اَذَقْنَا
النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوْا بِهَا ؕ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ ۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ اِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَ
ابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ ۫ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ رِّبًا لِّيَرْبُوَا۟
فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوْا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ زَكٰوةٍ تُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

Therefore, turn yourself dedicatedly to the religion of *tawḥīd*, Follow the religion of nature on which God created people. It is not permissible to change the nature created by God. This alone is the true religion but most people do not know. Turning attentively to it and fear Him only and be diligent in the prayer. And be not among the Idolaters – the Idolaters who split their religion apart and became divided into many sects. Each sect is engrossed in what it has. (30-32)

When people are inflicted with some calamity they call their Lord while turning to Him. Then when God makes them happy through His blessings, one group from them begins to associate partners with its Lord so as to show ingratitude to what We have bestowed on it. So, reap pleasure for a few days. Soon you will come to know. Have We revealed to them a proof which bears witness to those whom they associate with God. (33-35)

And when We bless people with joy through Our mercy, they become conceited and if because of their deeds they are struck with a calamity, they immediately take to despair. Have they not reflected that it is God Who abundantly gives sustenance to whomsoever He wills and gives sparingly to whomsoever He wills. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who believe. (36-37)

Therefore, give to the kinfolk, the destitute and the traveler his right. This is better for those who want to please God, and it is they who shall succeed. And the interest-based loan you give that it may prosper in the wealth of others, it does not prosper with God. And the *zakāh* you will give to please God, it is these people who are ones who will increase their wealth with God. (38-39)

Explanation

فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ؕ فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ؕ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ
الْقَيِّمُ ۙ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾[23]

23. Therefore, turn yourself dedicatedly to the religion of *tawḥīd*. Follow the

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Here the address is in the singular which is an obvious indication that it is directed to the Prophet (sws). Yet this address to him is in his capacity of the leader and advocate of the Muslims. Consequently, in the succeeding verses both the address and the accusatives of state (*hāl*) occur in the plural. In this particular verse, the Prophet (sws) and through him the rest of the Muslims are told that it has become clearly evident from reasons given earlier that the objections raised by his opponents against his call and the religion presented by him are totally baseless. The Prophet (sws) and his companions should devote themselves to the true religion of God and just ignore their opponents. The word الدِّيْنُ refers to the true religion of God: Islam. It was this religion to which all prophets and messengers of God called their people and which was completed through Muḥammad (sws). This religion is the true religion of God. Thus the it is stated: إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِندَ اللّٰهِ الإِسْلاَمُ (۳: ۱۹) (the only true religion in God's sight is Islam, (3:19)). The word حَنِيْف means "devoted and dedicated." The implication is that while disregarding all the filth of polytheism he should turn to the religion of monotheism the way Abraham (sws) had done. This word is specially used in the Qur'ān for Abraham (sws). For this reason, there is a reminder in this word of the example of dedication set by him.

Consider next the expression: فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِیْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا. Here a verb is suppressed which is evident from the previous verb. The implication would be: "while disconnecting yourself from everything follow this religion of nature on which the creator of nature has created people." At another place, I have already referred to the benefit of suppressing a verb at such instances: the purpose is to focus the entire attention of the addressee on the object of the verb. These words actually substantiate the veracity of the الدِّيْنُ (the religion) to which the earlier part of the verse directs the Prophet (sws) to devotedly turn to. In other words, this religion is not something which is being imposed on them externally. It is a treasure found within the nature of human beings. It is evident from this verse that wrong are the philosophers who say that the nature of a human being is like a clean slate and that it is the environment he lives in and the traditions that he is exposed to that make him what he becomes. God has created man in the best of moulds with the best of natures. He has granted him the awareness of good and evil and the cognizance of right and wrong. At the same time, God has also given him the urge to adopt what is right and shun what is wrong. However, this nature of man is not like the instinct of animals from which they cannot deviate. A person has the power of free will as well. For this reason, at times, a person is

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religion of nature on which God created people. It is not permissible to change the nature created by God. This alone is the true religion but most people do not know.

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so blinded by the love of this world and his own desires that in spite of knowing what is right and what is wrong goes after the wrong and in fact invents pretexts in favour.

It should be kept in mind that a person is in need of prophetic guidance not because he did not have an awareness of good and evil in him; on the contrary, in spite of this awareness because of some inherent weaknesses he could have been misled in many cases. Similarly, it was not possible for him to understand all the consequences of the basic concepts ingrained in his nature. For all this guidance, the Almighty sent prophets and messengers. Since the teachings of these prophets were based on the fundamental concepts ingrained in human nature, all upright people regarded the calls of the prophets to the calls of their own self. Only those people opposed the prophets who had perverted their natures, even though in their hearts they had acknowledged the veracity of the prophets. I have dwelt in detail on this subject in the explanation of Sūrah Hūd and Sūrah al-Nūr. If there is any need, readers may look it up. If the Qur'ān is called ذِکْر and ذِکْرٰی, it is because it reminds people of the concepts already found in them but they kept forgetting them and becoming oblivious to them.

In the sentence لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ the particle لَا is not meant for negation or negation of a possibility or negation of happening. Here it refers to negation of permissibility.

The implication is that it is not permissible to change the nature created by God. He is the Creator of everything. No one can know better than Him the purpose and objective of His creatures and hence none can be entitled to change anything created by Him. If a person dares do such a thing, it will mean that he claims that he can improve something created by God – which obviously is an absurd thought. It is much like placing the eyes that God has placed near the forehead at the back of the neck or at the foot of a person. It is like a woman – who God has made a woman – trying to become a man or vice versa. Such unbecoming efforts are bound to end in failures. Same is the case with the religion of nature. It is on the concepts of this religion which the Almighty has ingrained in a person that his well-being in this world and success in the next depends. If people deviate from it, they will deviate from the straight path. The necessary consequence of this is that his worldly and religious life will be ruined even if this deviation is made with the help of tall claims from science and other disciplines of knowledge.

It is then stated: ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ie. It is this religion which is the right religion. This means that it is this religion which has direct relationship with a person's intellect and nature. This is a very straight and short route to access God; there is no deviation in it.

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The words وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ state that most people are not aware of this reality. For this reason they have distorted it and now are trying their best to keep intact this distortion as well to urge people to adhere to this distortion.

مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾[24]

The expression مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ is an accusative of state (*hāl*) from the pronoun of address in فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ. It has been alluded to earlier that though this address is singular as far as the words are concerned, yet they imply plurality. The Prophet (sws) is addressed in them as the advocate and leader of the Muslims. The plural nature of the accusative of state confirms this deduction. The earlier verse asked the Prophet (sws) and as a result all Muslims to dedicate and devote themselves to God. This verse directs them to turn to God and to be God-fearing. The implication is that devotion of the intellect is not sufficient. Turning to God and fearing Him is also needed and at the same time fully abiding by the limits set by Him.

Consider next the words: وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ. The prayer is from among the basic directives of this religion. It is not only the protector but also the manifestation of dedication to God, turning to Him and God-consciousness stressed upon here.

The words وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ sound an admonition that they should remain at a distance from the Idolaters because they have ruined all the implications of this upright religion.

مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَكَانُوْا شِيَعًا ؕ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۢ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾[25]

This verse provides more details about the Idolaters following whose ways was expressly prohibited in the previous verse. This explanation has connected the discourse to the actual existing situation. Its foremost connotation is the Quraysh who by being incriminated with polytheism had totally split apart the religion they had received through Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws). Abraham (sws) taught them that there is only one God but they ended up inventing several gods and each tribe was so devoted to its god that it was not prepared to hear anything against him. Muslims were not given this directive because there was a possibility of anyone of them joining the Idolaters. On the contrary, this is an expression of abhorrence from

24. Turning attentively to it and fear Him only and be diligent in the prayer. And be not among the Idolaters –

25. the Idolaters who split their religion apart and became divided into many sects. Each sect is engrossed in what it has.

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polytheism and polytheists and has been stated while addressing the Muslims instead of the polytheists. It is as if the polytheists are not worthy of being addressed because of their stubbornness and hence the followers of the Prophet (sws) are addressed.

وَاِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُّنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَذَاقَهُمْ مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۫ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾[26]

This is a direct threat sounded to the Idolaters. Such is their state that when they are caught in a whirlpool, they beseech God with humility and obedience but when God blesses them with His mercy, they forget God and return to their deities whom they associate with Him. This subject has been discussed earlier in various styles and is also coming up in verse 32 of Sūrah al-Luqmān.

What is discussed in the words لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۫ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ has already been brought up earlier in verse 66 of Sūrah al-'Ankabūt: they receive favours from God but thank others and in this way show ingratitude to His favours. It is then said in a very stern manner that in spite of their ingratitude they may benefit from God's favours but soon they will bear the consequences of this attitude.

اَمْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾[27]

It has been explained earlier that a part of the discourse is suppressed in such interrogative sentences. It can be gauged from the tone of the speaker. If this suppression is accounted for, the whole discourse would be something like: these naïve people have baselessly made partners of God or have we revealed a proof which bears evidence to these associates being partners of God? In this style, sarcasm and humiliation, anger and wrath all are encapsulated. Very subtle examples of this style can be found in the last group of the Qur'ān.

These verses direct our attention to a very important psychological argument in favour of monotheism: when a person is really in need and is helpless, he leaves all other means and sources as well as his self-invented

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26. When people are inflicted with some calamity they call their Lord while turning to Him. Then when God makes them happy through His blessings, one group from them begins to associate partners with its Lord so as to show ingratitude to what We have bestowed on it. So, reap pleasure for a few days. Soon you will come to know.

27. Have We revealed to them a proof which bears witness to those whom they associate with God.

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deities and with full devotion turns to God. As soon as he finds relief and comfort, he once again resorts to the same misdoings he was formerly guilty of. It is evident from this that the real reason of polytheism is indifference. When a person is awoken from this indifference because of some warning, he begins to see the reality; when the situation changes he returns to his state of indifference.

وَاِذَآ اَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوْا بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ اِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾[28]

The verse states that the Almighty wants people whom He blessed with favours to be grateful. Similarly, He wants them to show patience if He puts them through trials and tribulations as a result of their misdeeds. Yet very few people turn out to be grateful to favours and patient on trials. Most people become arrogant when they are given favours and lose hope and despair if they are put through trials. These comments have been given in a general way because this is how things happen generally. However, at the time of revelation of this *sūrah*, they obviously referred to the Quraysh. In this way, they were indirectly told that today they are showing arrogance on the favours bestowed on them by God but tomorrow if they will be seized by Him they will cry and scream.

It is evident from the words بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ that if people are faced with a calamity in this world, then it is due to their misdeeds. This is the established practice of God as far as evil people are concerned. However, in this world all people even the great prophet Abraham (sws) undergo big trials. Such trials are in accordance with the established practice of trials constituted by God. According to this established practice, all people whether good or evil must undergo trials. It is not necessary that this be because of their deeds; in fact, in most circumstances it is because God wants to train and improve people.

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾[29]

The implication is that have these people not reflected that abundance or constriction in sustenance is in the hands of God. Its increase or decrease depends entirely on His desire and this desire is based on wisdom. For this

28. And when We bless people with joy through Our mercy, they become conceited and if because of their deeds they are struck with a calamity, they immediately take to despair.

29. Have they not reflected that it is God Who abundantly gives sustenance to whomsoever He wills and gives sparingly to whomsoever He wills. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who believe.

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reason, neither is it permissible for anyone to despair nor show pride and conceit. Only he has the right to show this pride who has control over his sustenance and only he should show despair in God who finds another way for himself than the way of God. When none of these options is possible, then the only right attitude is that a person shows gratitude on favours and patience during trials. God tests a person through both these circumstances. It will only be in the Hereafter when we will come to know who succeeded in this test and who failed.

It is stated that if people deliberate on this reality, then there are many signs for those who believe.

The greatest sign in this is that all the affairs of this universe are in the control of God, the one and only. Just as no one has control over life and death, similarly no one has control over increasing or decreasing of sustenance.

The second sign in this is that neither is an abundance of sustenance in this world an indication of a person's success nor its scantiness an indication of a person's failure. Both situations, in fact, are meant to test people. Success and failure will be decided in the Hereafter.

The third sign in this is that in this world every instant people are put into the trials of gratitude or patience. The fountainhead of all higher qualities in a person is these two traits. An explanation of this has already been given at an appropriate place of this exegesis.

فَاٰتِ ذَاالْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَ الْمِسْكِيْنَ وَ ابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ ۫ وَ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾[30]

Earlier in verse 31, the foremost pillar of this religion of nature has been mentioned in the form of the prayer. After this, some warnings were sounded. The last of these was that it is not befitting for a person who has abundant resources to regard them to be a legacy of his forefathers or a product of his own abilities and thereby show conceit; on the contrary, he should always remain grateful to his Lord.

Now in this verse, the way this gratitude should be expressed is delineated: people should give what is due on them from their wealth to their kindred, the destitute and the traveler. It is evident from the word حَقَّهٗ that there is a rightful share in the wealth of a person who is blessed with means and resources by God. He is actually entrusted with the obligation of fulfilling

30. Therefore, give to the kinfolk, the destitute and the traveller his right. This is better for those who want to please God, and it is they who shall succeed.

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this right. If there is any negligence in fulfilling them, he will be regarded as a usurper. The verse sates that for those who seek the pleasure of God this is the right way and it is they who will succeed in the Hereafter. It is an obvious corollary of this that people who make their wealth to be a means of conceit, luxury and greed will find that this wealth will become a means of loss and failure before God.

وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ رِّبًا لِّيَرْبُوَا۟ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوْا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ زَكٰوةٍ تُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾[31]

The word رِبا is used for the money that is lent on interest and is also used for the interest which is charged on lent money. Those who regard it to mean a gift are absolutely wrong. This word is used in accordance with the linguistic principle of Arabic called تسمية الشيء إلى ما يؤول إليه (naming something after its consequence). An example of this can be seen in verse 36 of Sūrah Yūsuf. I have written a detailed article on this verse that is found in my anthology of essays.

The word زَكٰوةٍ here does not occur here as a term. It refers to charity (*ṣadaqāt*). It is used in this meaning in the Qur'ān at other instances as well.

This verse mentions the opposite attitude mentioned in the previous one: there are people who instead of spending their wealth become involved in multiplying it and giving it as an interest-based loan so that it increases after sucking the blood of others; such people should remember that even if they multiply their wealth in this manner in this world, they should remember that it will not increase with God. Such wealth is obliterated by Him as is stated at another instance in the Qur'ān. Only that wealth increases with God which is spent in His way to please Him.

If one reflects on this verse, it becomes evident that God has compared the wealth of an interest-charger to an ox that grows fat by grazing on the lands of others. There is no blessing in such wealth. Only that wealth carries any blessing which grows by grazing in its own field and then is expended to please God and to fulfill rights. The verse states that it is such people who increase their capital. The rate of this increase has been mentioned in detail at another instance in the Qur'ān.

The desire to accumulate wealth is generally because of fears of the future. Yet a person views the future with a very narrow eye and sees what lies ahead

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31. And the interest-based loan you give that it may prosper in the wealth of others, it does not prosper with God. And the *zakāh* you will give to please God, it is these people who are ones who will increase their wealth with God.

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of him in this world only. He is not able to see the real future which is the Hereafter. He should realize that he can gain the real benefit of this wealth if instead of depositing it in the banks of this world he deposits it in the bank of God so that it can be of use to him in his eternal life.

Here it may also be kept in mind, as is pointed out at another place, that there is a basic difference between the capital invested by a tradesman or a businessman in a permissible trade or business and between the capital of a money lender who increases it by lending it on interest: the capital of a tradesman or a businessman after braving many dangers and different circumstances increases from its own circle of investment; on the other hand, the capital of an interest-lender is like an ambush in which he hides and without taking any risks increases itself from the money of the needy. Because of this basic difference between the two, Islam has regarded the increase gained in trade and business to be blessed and the increase gained through interest to be evil and prohibited.

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Section IV: Verses (40-60)

Coming up are the closing verses of the *sūrah*. The opponents of the Prophet (sws) are threatened in them. They are guilty of razing to ground the two foundations of the religion of nature: monotheism and sympathy. In this way they have ruined the whole social set-up and created disorder in the land. This attitude has entitled to be seized by the Almighty so that they may be punished them for their misdemeanour.

After this, Muslims are given glad tidings of divine help and dominance. It is also highlighted through signs of this universe that when God wants to shower His mercy on someone He transforms unfavourable circumstances into favourable ones.

At the same time, it is stressed upon the Prophet (sws) and the companions to fully adhere to the religion of nature and are told to ignore all those who have become blind and deaf. Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ یُمِیْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ یُحْیِیْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآىِٕكُمْ مَّنْ یَّفْعَلُ مِنْ ذٰلِكُمْ مِّنْ شَیْءٍ ؕ
سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَ تَعٰلٰى عَمَّا یُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾ ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِی الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَیْدِی النَّاسِ لِیُذِیْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ
الَّذِیْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ یَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿۴۱﴾ قُلْ سِیْرُوْا فِی الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَیْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ

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مُّشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ مَنْ
كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِاَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ
فَضْلِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرٰتٍ وَّلِيُذِيْقَكُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَلِتَجْرِيَ
الْفُلْكُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ
فَجَاۗءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا ۭ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ
يُرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهٗ فِي السَّمَاۗءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاۗءُ وَيَجْعَلُهٗ كِسَفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ
فَاِذَآ اَصَابَ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ اِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يُّنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ
قَبْلِهٖ لَمُبْلِسِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۭ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ
عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ اَرْسَلْنَا رِيْحًا فَرَاَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَاِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ
الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاۗءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ۭ اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ
يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ ضُعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضُعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّشَيْبَةً ۭ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْقَدِيْرُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۙ
مَا لَبِثُوْا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ
اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ۠ فَهٰذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَوْمَىِٕذٍ لَّا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَ
لَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۭ وَلَىِٕنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِاٰيَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا مُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾

It is God Who created you, then provided you with sustenance, then gives you death, then will bring you back to life. Has any of the partners you associate with God done any of these things? Pure is He and exalted above all what they associate with Him. Disorder everywhere on the land and sea has spread in consequence of the misdeeds of people so that God may make them taste the fruit of their misdeeds that they may pay heed. (40-41)

Tell them: "Roam about in the land and observe the fate of those gone by. Most of them were polytheists." (42)

Thus align yourself with the true religion before arrives from God a day which cannot be put off. On that day, they will be separated. He who disbelieved will bear its consequences and those who did righteous deeds are indeed paving the way for themselves so that God through His grace reward

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those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds. God never befriends the disbelievers. (43-45)

And among His signs is that He sends winds as glad tidings and so as to bless you with His mercy and so that the ships sail at His bidding and that you seek His bounty and that you become grateful. (46)

And before you also We have sent messengers to their nations. Thus they came to them with open signs; so, We took revenge from the wrongdoers. And it was mandatory upon Us to help the believers. It is God Who sends the winds; thus they bring forth the clouds. God then spreads them in the sky as He intends. And He makes them into various layers; then you see rain emerging from between them. Thus when He sends this down to those of His servants He chooses, they rejoice all of a sudden even though they had totally lost hope before this happiness prior to its coming down. So observe the signs of God's mercy: how He enlivens the land after its death. Indeed, it is He who gives life to the dead and He has power over all things. (47-50)

And if We let loose on them another wind so that they see their crops grow pale, then they will turn to disbelief after this. So, you can neither make the dead hear your call nor the deaf while they walk turning away from you. You can also not lead the blind away from their error. You can only make those listen who believe in Our revelations. Thus it is they who are obedient. (51-53)

It is God Who has created you weak; then blessed you with strength after weakness and after strength gave you weakness and old age. He creates whatever He intends and He is all-knowing and all-powerful. (54)

And the day, the Day of Judgement arrives, the wrongdoers will swear that they did not stay but for an hour. In this way, their intellects have been faltering. And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: "According to the register of God, you have stayed till the Day of Judgement. So this is the day of resurrection but you did not know." Thus on that day the pleas of those who were unjust to themselves will be of no avail nor will they be asked to please God. (55-57)

And We have cited all kinds of parables in this Qur'ān for people. And whatever sign you bring to these people, those who have disbelieved will say: "You are absolute liars." In this manner, God seals the hearts of those who do not want to know. So, be patient. Indeed, the promise of God is certain to be fulfilled. And let not those who do not have conviction prove you weak. (58-60)

Explanation

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ یُمِیْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ یُحْیِیْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآىِٕكُمْ مَّنْ یَّفْعَلُ مِنْ ذٰلِكُمْ مِّنْ شَیْءٍ ؕ

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سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾[32]

The details of how the Qur'ān has refuted the campaign launched by the Quraysh to create doubts regarding the supremacy of Muslims and the beliefs of monotheism and hereafter have been mentioned in the previous verses. They had raised these doubts by using the victory of the Persians in their favour. Now in this verse the Quraysh are directly warned. They should not try to satisfy themselves on the basis of these childish assurances and in fact face the reality; time has arrived to unfold the consequences of the disorder they have created around them because of their misdeeds; their supposed deities will not be able to save them. This verse is actually a prelude to this warning. It is stated that they have been created by God and it is He Who provides them with sustenance; death too is in His control and then it is He Who will raise them back to life. They cannot claim that a single one of these tasks are done by their deities or they help God in them. So till when will they continue to live on their support? And if they are seized by God, how will these deities save them.

Whilst the first part of the verse was addressed directly to the Quraysh, the last part: سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ is addressed to them in an indirect way. The eloquence found in both these styles has been explained at various instances in this exegesis.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾[33]

Just as the expressions "day and night" and "morning and evening" are meant for comprehensive inclusion and coverage, the expression land and sea (الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ) also occur in the same meaning in such contexts. Thus what is meant to be conveyed is that disorder can be seen in all spheres of life whether individual or collective, ideological or practical. The correctness in view and ideology is entirely based on faith in God and the resoluteness of practice is based on Islam and both these necessitate one another. If one of them falls, the other one falls too and if both of them are razed to the ground then disorder will be rampant in every sphere of human life. If, in spite of the razing down of the two, there seems some spark of life anywhere, then it is just transient.

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32. It is God Who created you, then provided you with sustenance, then gives you death, then will bring you back to life. Has any of the partners you associate with God done any of these things? Pure is He and exalted above all what they associate with Him.

33. Disorder everywhere on the land and sea has spread in consequence of the misdeeds of people so that God may make them taste the fruit of their misdeeds that they may pay heed.

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Those people who give importance to it merely deceive themselves.

The words لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ express the consequence of the situation as per which certain people because of their misdeeds contaminate each sphere of life with disorder and in this way practically call out to God to punish them for these misdeeds. Consequently, God does precisely this. The purpose is to induce them to pay heed and return to the right path by abandoning their ill-ways.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that the nations of God's messengers face two types of torments: first, to jolt them and second to finally vanquish them. Here the Quraysh are warned of the first type of torment: they have made themselves worthy of torment that warns them; if this torment visits them and they do not mend their ways, then that torment will also come which will break their backs.

قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾[34]

The Prophet (sws) is asked to tell them that they must not rest at peace through childish assurances; they should observe the fate of the previous nations by looking at their remnants. Most of these people were polytheists like them. Just as there are very few monotheists among the Quraysh, among these previous nations too very few purely worshipped God. Finally, God sifted out these few people and destroyed the rest.

فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾[35]

The direction of address changes in this verse and now the Prophet (sws) and his companions are addressed the way they are in verse 31 earlier. The implication is that if these stubborn and wretched people do not listen, they should be ignored; the Prophet (sws) and his companions should focus their attention on the religion of God which is the call of human nature; they should also start preparing for the day which is certain to come and when it arrives at the behest of God no one will have the power to avert it.

The word يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ implies that whilst today these people trust their deities and intercessors and also show conceit on the strength of their clan but on that day every one will be separated from one another; no one will be of any benefit to anyone. To convey the same meaning, the word used earlier in verse 14 is: يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ.

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34. Tell them: "Roam about in the land and observe the fate of those gone by. Most of them were polytheists."

35. Thus. align yourself with the true religion before arrives from God a day which cannot be put off. On that day, they will be separated.

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مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِاَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾[36]

On that day, everyone will be rewarded or punished according to his deeds. He who disbelieved will have to face its evil consequences; no one else will share this burden with him. Similarly, those who are doing righteous deeds are actually making their own future bright and only they will be rewarded for it.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾[37]

This verse is actually connected to the words مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ of verse 43. In other words, the real purpose of that days' arrival is that God with His grace reward those who had faith and did righteous deeds. It is evident from this that the real objective of the Hereafter is to reward the believers; punishing the disbelievers is not the real objective; it is merely the essential consequence.

It is evident from the words مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ that the reward given to the believers will not merely be because of their good deeds but in accordance with the grace of God. And our measures are totally incapable of having an idea of this grace.

Words are unable to express the abhorrence found in the words اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ for disbelief and disbelievers. To gauge the rank and status bestowed on the believers, it is sufficient to be told that the primary reason for the advent of the Hereafter is to reward them. As far as the disbelievers are concerned, the Almighty has merely said that He does not like them. Obviously, when this is the case, the consequence is that their abode will be Hell. God does not care about them.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرٰتٍ وَّلِيُذِيْقَكُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾[38]

This verse and the ones succeeding it assure that Prophet (sws) and the Muslims. They are told that just as the Almighty sends favourable winds to suffocating environments which come as glad tidings of mercy to people so that He may grant them with sustenance and provisions, in a similar way,

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36. He who disbelieved will bear its consequences and those who did righteous deeds are indeed paving the way for themselves.

37. So that God through His grace reward those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds. God never befriends the disbelievers.

38. And among His signs is that He sends winds as glad tidings and so as to bless you with His mercy and that the ships sail at His bidding and that you seek His bounty and so that you become grateful.

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God will create favourable circumstances for them.

The words وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ بِأَمْرِهِ express the fact that it is these favourable winds because of which ships sail at the behest of God so that people can travel from one place to another. The expression وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ implies: "so that people seek God's sustenance through trade," The words وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ refer to the fact that all this system of providence has been set up so that people can benefit from God's favours and express gratitude. There is a very subtle warning in this for Muslims: God's help and blessings will manifest itself for them but after receiving them they must not become indifferent to God; on the contrary, these favours entail that they must remain grateful to Him.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءُوهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا ۖ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾[39]

This verse explains in the light of history what is said in the previous verse. Muḥammad (sws) is not the first messenger of God sent in this world. God has sent messengers before him as well and the way His established practice manifested itself for them, it will also manifest itself in his case. The messengers who came before him also brought veritable signs and proofs to their respective nations. However, instead of valuing these signs and proofs, these nations adopted a criminal attitude and became enemies to those who believed in their messengers and to their companions. Finally, as a consequence of this wrong attitude towards the believers, God punished them. This is because it is incumbent on God to help the believers. The implication is that Muḥammad's enemies too will suffer the same fate. He should rest assured.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسَفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ ۚ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمُبْلِسِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾[40]

The circumstances in which the above stated glad tidings of help were

39. And before you also We have sent messengers to their nations. Thus they came to them with open signs; so, We took revenge from the wrongdoers. And it was mandatory upon Us to help the believers.

40. It is God Who sends the winds; thus they bring forth the clouds. God then spreads them in the sky as He intends. And He makes them into various layers; then you see rain emerging from between them. Thus when He sends this down to those of His servants He chooses, they rejoice all of a sudden even though they had totally lost hope before this happiness prior to its coming down.

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given were totally adverse. For this reason, to assure Muslims, in particular the common ones among them, the Almighty has directed their attention to a sign of his power and mercy which every person observes. It is stated that it is God's power and majesty alone that He sends winds which propel the clouds, then according to His wisdom He spreads these clouds the way He intends and makes them multi-layered. Then people see that from within them appears rain. So those who benefit from this favour of God, instantly rejoice even though a little earlier they had lost hope. The implication is that in the same manner, God's mercy and help will appear for Muḥammad (sws). He may consider far it fetched today but when it manifests itself, he will find it to be something near and will rejoice at its arrival.

After the words مِنۡ قَبۡلِ اَنۡ يُّنَزَّلَ the repetition of مِّنۡ قَبۡلِهٖ in the later part apparently seems to be a repetition. Yet deliberation shows that this is not so. Two separate statements are given here: before rain they had lost hope in rain and before the glad tidings materialized they had lost hope in happiness.

فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْىِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْىِ الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿۵۰﴾ [41]

This mention of the Hereafter is also meant for assurance. Since believers pin all their hopes on the Hereafter, after referring to the signs of their worldly success in the previous verse, here in this verse the mercy that will manifest itself for them in the Hereafter is also alluded to. They are told that just as they observe the signs of God's mercy when He makes the earth lush after it has become dry, in a similar way, He will raise the dead. He has power over everything. The implication is that the Prophet (sws) should ignore this foolish notion of the disbelievers as per which they deny the Hereafter and regard it to be a mere thought; this great mercy of God will manifest itself and on that day his opponents will realize their wretchedness. It is evident from the Qur'ān that the Hereafter is actually a necessary consequence of God's attribute of mercy and its real purpose would be to reward the believers for their sacrifices and selfless behaviour. Readers are advised to read what we have written while explaining verse 12 of Sūrah al-An'ām.

وَلَئِنۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا رِيۡحًا فَرَاَوۡهُ مُصۡفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوۡا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهٖ يَكۡفُرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۱﴾ [42]

This is a comment on verses 48-49 above. The implication is that generally people despair in a very short while and rejoice in a short while. If there is a

41. So, observe the signs of God's mercy: how He enlivens the land after its death. Indeed, it is He who gives life to the dead and He has power over all things.

42. And if We let loose on them another wind so that they see their crops grow pale, then they will turn to disbelief after this.

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little delay in rain, they loose hope and as soon as the downpour comes they dance with joy. And if after rain God sends unfavourable winds which adversely affect their blooming cultivated lands, ingratitude and despair will return to them. The implication is that there is no use for the Prophet (sws) to expect anything good from such fickle-minded people. His messages will only be understood by those who have the temperament to be grateful when blessed with favours and to be patient in times of difficulties.

I have delineated the difference between رِيَاحٌ and رِيحٌ at an appropriate place of this exegesis. The former is mostly used for favourable winds and winds conducive to the weather. The latter is generally used for winds that bring calamities. The antecedent of the accusative pronoun in فَرَاَوْهُ is زَرْعٌ or a word of similar meaning. An indication of this is found in the previous verse because the words يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا mean "the earth springing to life after death."

فَاِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ؕ اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾[43]

The implication of this verse is that spiritually dead are those who are so fickle-minded that they vacillate between despair and arrogance in short periods of time and who in spite observing so many signs of God are not convinced. Such people are deaf and blind. It is neither possible for the Prophet (sws) to talk to such blind, deaf and blind people and make them understand the truth nor is it his responsibility. There is an indication in the words وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ that even the deaf could be expected to have some ability to hear if they turn in the direction of the caller but what good can be expected from the deaf who turn on their heals and run away. The preposition عَنْ in وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ evidences that the meaning of turning away is encompassed in the expression. The implied meaning is that the Prophet (sws) cannot bring the blind back to the right path from their ill-ways. In the words اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا those of God's signs found within and outside human beings towards which attention is directed to with full detail earlier. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is being told that his words can only influence those who believe in the signs of God's power, mercy and justice that are spread far and wide around them. There is simply no use inviting those who do not believe in these signs.

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43. So, you can neither make the dead hear your call nor the deaf while they walk turning away from you. You can also not lead the blind away from their error. You can only make those listen who believe in Our revelations. Thus it is they who are obedient.

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The words فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ refer to the fact that those who observe, understand and believe in the signs around them and those within them will indeed understand the Prophet's (sws) call and will submit to God in this regard.

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ ضُعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضُعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّ شَیْبَةً ؕ یَخْلُقُ مَا یَشَآءُ ۚ وَ هُوَ الْعَلِیْمُ الْقَدِیْرُ ﴿۵۴﴾[44]

Now at the end a warning is issued: no one should show conceit on his or her strengths, abilities, means and resources. Whatever a person receives is from God and it returns to Him as well. People should reflect on their existence: God creates them in the form of a very weak and frail infant. After this frailty, He blesses them with the strength and abilities of youth. In the next stage, weakness returns to them when they grow old. No one has the power to sustain his youth and strength. It is in the control of God alone to create whatever He wants. He has knowledge of everything and also has power on everything.

وَ یَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ یُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۙ مَا لَبِثُوْا غَیْرَ سَاعَةٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا یُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾[45]

This is a second warning: the life of this world should not be regarded as very long. On the Day of Judgement, when the wrongdoers will be raised to life, they will swear and say to one another that they have not spent more than an hour. The implication is that today these people feel secure that even if there is a Day of Judgement, there are many phases that must elapse before it arrives. Thus they still have to pass through the phases of life, death, *barzakh* and resurrection. They reckon that why should they be worried of it now and ruin all their pleasures. Yet the day they will be raised to life they will think that all these phases have passed in the blink of an eye.

The words كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا یُؤْفَكُوْنَ imply that these foolish people never had the inkling to estimate the facts. On the Day of Judgement, they will see as if all their past had vanished in the blink of an eye. Yet when they remained in this world, they regarded the phases of life, death and resurrection to be so long that they never felt the need to worry about them.

وَ قَالَ الَّذِیْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَ الْاِیْمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِیْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ اِلٰى یَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ۚ فَهٰذَا یَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَ لٰكِنَّكُمْ

44. It is God Who has created you weak; then blessed you with strength after weakness and after strength gave you weakness and old age. He creates whatever He intends and He is all-knowing and all-powerful.

45. And the day, the Day of Judgement arrives, the wrongdoers will swear that they did not stay but for an hour. In this way, their intellects have been faltering.

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كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾[46]

The expression أُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيْمَانَ refers to those people whose intellect remained sound in this world and they were blessed with the knowledge of God's revelations and faith in Him and in the Hereafter. These people will check the wrongdoers on their senseless tirade and tell them that their estimate is totally wrong. According to the Book of God, they have remained till the Day of Judgement, which today stares at them but they have not been aware of this. The words فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ refer to the register of God in which everything is written. The words وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ allude to the fact that these people regarded it to be merely a figment of imagination and would not give it any importance. It is evident from this that those who recognize the importance of their life and lead it while keeping the Hereafter in consideration will not be overcome with anxiety and nervousness on the Day of Judgement. On the contrary, they will think that they have reached the final destination of the journey of life in accordance with God's prescribed plan.

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾[47]

The word إِسْتِعْتَابٌ has been explained at another place in this exegesis. The implication is that on that day no person's apology will be of any avail to him nor will anyone be given the opportunity to try to please his Lord. Such behaviour can only be of benefit in this world. He who did not take advantage of this opportunity will never get it again. Whoever wants to prepare himself for the final day should do it today because he will not have another chance to say that he did not get the time to prepare himself.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ؕ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِاٰيَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا مُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾[48]

The expression ضرب مثل is originally used to convey a wise counsel in the form of a parable but in its wider connotation it also means to merely convey a wise counsel. I have discussed this idiom at another place in this exegesis.

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46. And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: "According to the register of God, you have stayed till the Day of Judgement. So, this is the day of resurrection but you did not know."

47. Thus on that day the pleas of those who were unjust to themselves will be of no avail nor will they be asked to please God.

48. And We have cited all kinds of parables in this Qur'ān for people. And whatever sign you bring to these people, those who have disbelieved will say: "You are absolute liars."

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This verse addresses the Prophet (sws) and informs him that whatever counsel and advice are needed to make people understand have all been stated in this Qur'ān. So he should present these before them and remember that if they do not understand through this book, then whatever great a miracle he shows them, the disbelievers will only regard it to be false and a trick that he has played.

كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾[49]

The implication is that God seals the hearts of those who deprive themselves of the faculties of head and heart and are not ready to listen to and understand what is reasonable.

فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾[50]

The word استخفاف means to discard the views of someone by regarding them to be flimsy and weak.

Now here, at the end, the Prophet (sws) is assured in very emphatic words to adhere to his stance. The promise God has made with him regarding help and success in this world and the next is bound to be fulfilled. Let not people who do not believe in God's promises prove him frail and unimportant by making fun of him. The implication is that if he sticks to his message and views, these people will stand humiliated and unsuccessful themselves; all their endeavours to uproot him will end up in failure.

With these lines, the exegesis of this *sūrah* stands completed. فَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ (so, gratitude be to God on this).

Raḥmānābād
Saturday
22nd June 1974

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49. In this manner, God seals the hearts of those who do not want to know.

50. So, be patient. Indeed, the promise of God is certain to be fulfilled. And let not those who do not have conviction prove you weak.

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